

**Department of Mental Health  
Employment Plan for FY 2003**  
*(Strategic Plan Key Outcome Objective 4B)*

**Introduction**

Consumers of the Department of Mental Health want to work, and many of them are capable of working. Employment boosts self-esteem, provides a sense of purpose and accomplishment, and promotes independence. Because of related functional limitations and the social stigma placed on people with disabilities, this population has continuously struggled with barriers to employment and access to community services.

DMH policies for consumer employment promote a community approach that integrates clinical and vocational/supported employment services. State-level partnerships should exist between DMH, consumer advocacy organizations, and agencies providing employment programs, including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Development Boards, etc. Regional and local partnerships between employment service entities, DMH community-based providers, and state-operated facilities should be formed in areas where they currently do not exist or are not operating as efficiently as they could be.

In order to facilitate productive working relationships between DMH and employment entities and thereby increase employment among people with disabilities served by the Department, the three divisions have designated staff to participate on a *DMH Employment Team*. Team members are responsible for implementing the Employment Plan and monitoring progress throughout the year.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a primary partner for DMH since their mission is to serve individuals with disabilities. The Divisions of CPS and MRDD transfer \$1 million annually to VR to provide enhanced support services to DMH consumers. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has designated a staff person to serve as liaison between the two agencies. The DMH Employment Team meets regularly with VR's liaison to strengthen this working relationship and collaborate on new federal employment initiatives that will benefit DMH consumers.

It is the intent of the Employment Team to not only continue the working relationship with VR, but to strengthen or form new partnerships with other consumer advocacy groups and state and local agencies that can play a role in enhancing employment outcomes for DMH consumers.

**Department of Mental Health  
Employment Plan – Fiscal Year 2003**

GOAL	DISCUSSION	ACTION STEPS	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATES		ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE
<b>Goal #1: Determine the number of DMH consumers who are currently employed, participating in supported employment programs, or receiving vocational services.</b>	In order to determine current employment levels as well as track in the future, a baseline measurement of competitive employment among DMH consumers is needed.	A. Data match SSN's of DMH clients with Divisions of Employment Security and VR records.	Debbie McBaine–lead ADA Karen Battjes–lead CPS Nancy Nickolaus–lead MRDD Allen Templeton–lead OIS Andy Homer Vickie Epple Gary Schanzmeyer John Harper (VR)	<b>Start</b> 6/1/02	<b>Complete</b> 6/30/03	
		B. Analyze VR match to determine number of DMH consumers served; number currently employed or in supported employment; and number who have maintained employment/supported employment.		8/1/02	12/31/02	
		C. Employment Security data will be analyzed to determine percentage of adults served by DMH who work in competitive employment during or after DMH services (by fiscal year) and percentage making wages above the federal poverty level for a family of four.	Gary Harbison–lead Judy Rizner	6/1/02	6/30/03	
<b>Goal #2: Provide and Coordinate Training/Educational Opportunities for Consumers, Providers, DMH Staff</b>	A number of initiatives are currently underway that can be of benefit to DMH providers and consumers including <i>Ticket to Work</i> and the Medicaid “buy-in” (spend down) option for people with disabilities who work but still need access to medical assistance.	A. Employment Team and VR Liaison have attended <i>Ticket to Work</i> training and are discussing options for promoting this initiative among DMH providers who are eligible to become <i>Employment Networks</i> , for which there are financial incentives. On-site training by Maximus, the SSA's contracted entity responsible for the day to day administration of the Ticket Program, is being explored for late fall to be held in a central location.	Debbie McBaine–lead Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus John Harper	7/16/02	12/31/02	12/3/02

GOAL	DISCUSSION	ACTION STEPS	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATES		ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE
Training/Education, cont.		B. Employment Team continues to attend educational sessions on the "buy-in" in order to educate DMH consumers, staff, and providers of its provisions, application, benefits counseling, etc.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus John Harper	Ongoing		
		C. Employment Team will educate their respective service providers and staff about the DMH Employment Plan and the importance of implementing employment/vocational goals in their treatment planning and person centered process.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus John Harper	7/1/02	12/31/02	
		D. Employment Team will meet regularly with staff liaison from VR and other employment/vocational training entities such as the Div. of Workforce Development, and obtain input from consumers, staff, and providers in order to facilitate linkages between these groups to effectively match DMH consumers with community resources.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus John Harper	Ongoing		
		E. Provide web-based updates and fact sheet mailings on employment issues to consumers, providers, and staff.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus	Ongoing		
		F. Facilitate communication and education between local employment/vocational agencies, Division of Family Services staff, and DMH regional staff to assist consumers in coordination of benefits and work incentive programs.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus	Ongoing		

GOAL	DISCUSSION	ACTION STEPS	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATES		ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE
<b>Goal #3: Promote Employment-Related Treatment/Habilitation Planning Among DMH Contract Providers and State-Operated Facilities</b>	Employment has not historically been a focus or stated goal for DMH consumers, particularly those receiving substance abuse or mental health treatment services. The standard approach was to address the consumer's addiction or mental illness, and in doing so, it was assumed employment would take care of itself because of the consumer's increased self-esteem and level of functioning. Even in instances where employment was a stated goal of treatment, the needed vocational services were not readily available for all consumers. Because of the importance of employment in the recovery process and in achieving self-sufficiency and a sense of independence, it is imperative that vocational services be incorporated into treatment and habilitation planning. Research indicates that employment before or during treatment predicts both longer retention in treatment and the likelihood of successful outcomes.	A. Initiate discussions with service providers, regional centers, etc., to discuss ways to ensure that employment goals are incorporated into the treatment planning and person-centered process.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus	8/1/02	12/31/02	
		B. Explore and develop employment/vocational options for youth who are transitioning from school to the work environment.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus	10/1/02	11/1/02	
		C. Explore and develop transportation options for consumers who want to work, particularly in rural areas where this is a barrier to employment.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus John Harper			
		D. Develop mechanism for monitoring and/or incentivizing providers to ensure they are addressing employment and vocational issues with their consumers.	Michael Couty Diane McFarland Anne Deaton			
		E. To assist DMH facilities and service providers in accessing vocational services for consumers, arrange for joint training/educational opportunities (such as the Spring Training Institute) with staff of VR, Division of Workforce Development, and other entities that can provide employment and vocational services to DMH consumers.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus John Harper			

GOAL	DISCUSSION	ACTION STEPS	STAFF RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATES		ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE
<b>Goal #4: Link Housing and Employment Resources</b>	Housing and employment are both critical elements in achieving successful outcomes for DMH consumers.	A. Employment Team will collaborate with the Department's Housing Team to assist individuals in obtaining and retaining the housing supports necessary for sustained competitive employment.	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus Karia Basta - lead	9/1/02	Ongoing	
<b>Goal #5: Establish Employment Targets for FY '04</b>	Once a baseline is established, target rates for future employment outcomes can be set. This data can be used during the budget process, meeting block grant requirements, etc.	<p>A. Using baseline data, each Division will set employment targets for Fiscal Year 2004.</p> <p>B. Continued data collection from VR and Employment Security and matching with CIMOR data will enable staff to determine whether the Divisions are meeting their target rates and where improvement is needed.</p> <p>C. Future outcome measurement efforts will include examination of the effects of employment, education, or training facilitated by DMH initiatives on DMH consumer outcomes.</p>	Debbie McBaine Karen Battjes Nancy Nickolaus Andy Homer Vickie Epple Gary Schanzmeyer Allen Templeton	6/01/02	6/30/03	

09/26/02